



Swine-origin Influenza A (H1N1) Virus: Collection and Transport of Specimens to the Washington State Public Health Laboratories May 7, 2009

The Washington State Public Health Laboratories (PHL) are currently performing RT-PCR only for swine-origin influenza (H1N1) virus (S-OIV). Nasopharyngeal swabs in viral transport media are the preferred specimen type. Nasal aspirates, nasal swabs, and throat swabs in viral transport media will also be tested.

Nasopharyngeal Swab Specimen Collection

Specimens should be obtained using appropriate infection control precautions.

1. Use only sterile Dacron or rayon swabs with wire or plastic shafts. Insert the swab into the nostril parallel to the palate until resistance is met by contact with the nasopharynx. Leave the swab in for a few seconds. If possible, do the other nostril with the same swab.
2. Place the swab immediately into a sterile vial containing 2 mL of viral transport media (this is a pink fluid). Break off or cut the end of the applicator shaft and close the vial tightly.
3. Label the vial with the patient's name, specimen source and date obtained.

Note: Swabs that have been in contact with reagents used for other tests **CANNOT** be used.

Storage, Packaging and Shipping:

- Respiratory specimens should be refrigerated at 4 °C until ready for transport.
- Pack and label clinical specimens as Biological Substances, UN 3373. Pack and ship according to United States Department of Transportation and United States Postal Service regulations.
- Each specimen must be accompanied by a completed PHL Viral Examination Form (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/PHL/Forms/SerVirHIV.pdf>). This form should go into the OUTER pouch of the plastic biohazard envelope. Do not place any paperwork in the inner pouch along with the vial.
- Transport specimens to the PHL on ice packs so the package arrives within 72 hours of collection. PHL is open to receive influenza specimens Monday through Friday 8 am–5 pm and Saturday 9 am–12 pm.
- Specimens should be shipped to: Washington State Public Health Laboratories
Attn: PHL Virology Laboratory
1610 NE 150th Street
Shoreline, WA 98155